

Prospect House

Inspection dates

24–26 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has taken the school from strength to strength. She is determined that every pupil will achieve success. The headteacher and the proprietor have ensured that all the independent school standards are fully met.
- Staff develop good relationships with pupils, overcoming their distrust of adults in authority. Pupils learn to be considerate of others and respect differences.
- Pupils feel safe. They appreciate the lengths staff go to, to keep them from harm. Staff make sure that pupils quickly learn how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are well prepared to move on to their next stage. Staff ensure that pupils acquire the skills they need for independent living and achieve recognised qualifications.
- Teachers make sure that pupils know the current levels they are working at as well as their predicted grades. However, pupils are not always sure about what they need to know and be able to do to reach the targets set.
- Teachers make good use of the comprehensive information they have about pupils. They plan challenging lessons which engage pupils. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils contribute to their local community through regular voluntary work.
- For many pupils, the school is a turning point in their lives, helping them to get back on track. Pupils' greatly improve their attendance and behaviour.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance. They have developed a detailed school improvement plan. However, they have not ensured that the impact of planned actions is easily measurable.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review the school's improvement plan so that it is more helpful to leaders and governors in checking whether the actions taken have had the desired effect, when they should have taken effect and who to hold responsible.
- Make sure that pupils are well informed about:
 - what they need to do to improve their work
 - the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to achieve the targets set for them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher works tirelessly to make sure that every pupil who attends her school succeeds. The school is often the 'last hope' for pupils. Pupils and staff say that the headteacher is 'passionate' about helping pupils achieve, often transforming pupils' lives. As one pupil said, 'This is the best place I could be right now.'
- The headteacher has wasted no time since the previous inspection. She has increased opportunities for pupils to practise their basic reading and writing skills. Moreover, the headteacher has made sure that she uses feedback from pupils and support staff, together with her own observations, to challenge teachers to improve. Pupils report favourably on the positive difference this approach has made to their learning experiences.
- The headteacher has refined and improved the curriculum. She has collaborated with a virtual school, local college, specialist teachers and the local community to extend the range of subjects, qualifications and activities offered. She has kept up with recent changes and made sure that pupils only follow courses which lead to recognised qualifications. The headteacher is undaunted by the level of need of some pupils; drawing on expertise from other professionals, including speech and language therapists, to help her devise schemes of work and lessons to suit.
- The headteacher puts great emphasis on extra-curricular activities. She spends time talking with pupils, finding out about their interests. Staff encourage pupils to try new activities. For example, pupils went walking recently, reaching the top of one of the highest fells in the Lake District. Staff encourage pupils to achieve their own personal goals, such as attending a local slimming group to help achieve a healthy weight. The school makes good use of the local area. For example, staff arranged a visit to a working farm. For some pupils who had never visited the countryside, this gave them first-hand experience of where some of their food comes from.
- The school places great emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff do not shy away from challenging some of the views held by pupils, for example hostility towards homosexual people. Staff invite external speakers to visit the school, for example a former drug addict and a transgender person, to talk with the pupils and share their experiences. During the inspection, pupils were researching the legal minimum age for being held criminally responsible, drinking alcohol and buying a pet. This activity led to much debate about the rationale for these laws and comparison with the laws in other countries.
- Pupils are encouraged to take an interest in current affairs. Pupils found out about the views on both sides of last year's referendum debate and formed their own opinions. Pupils held their own mock referendum. For some pupils, this led to a debate about the minimum age for voting.
- The school places great emphasis on staff training. The headteacher has made links with another local school to share ideas. The headteacher makes sure that she keeps up to date with developments in education. For example, she has attended a national conference on special educational needs and briefings about new qualification requirements.

- The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's performance and has correctly identified what more needs to be done. However, the school's improvement plan does not clearly define the timescales for actions and who is responsible for overseeing their implementation and for checking their effectiveness. These shortcomings make it challenging for senior leaders to monitor the work of the school closely.
- The proprietor publishes a range of information about the school on its website, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Governance

- The proprietor keeps a close eye on the school. He knows staff and pupils extremely well. The proprietor works well with the headteacher: together they make sure that their shared vision for the school is communicated clearly to the staff.
- The proprietor is committed to continually improving the school. He commissioned an independent external review of the school which gave him an accurate view of the quality of the provision. The proprietor and headteacher used the findings well to inform the school's improvement plan.
- The proprietor ensures that every application for a school place is carefully considered. He ensures that pupils are only offered a place if the school is confident that they can meet their needs and their admission will not negatively impact on the pupils currently on roll.
- The proprietor ensures that the school continues to meet the independent school standards. He ensures that the premises and accommodation are well maintained. There is no unnecessary delay in making decisions about any requests for additional resources to support pupils.
- The proprietor ensures that staff performance is routinely reviewed and any issues are dealt with swiftly and robustly.
- The weekly staff team meetings, set up by the proprietor, make sure that all staff are well informed about pupils and their progress. The proprietor makes sure that there are ample opportunities for staff to share their ideas.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The proprietor ensures that checks on the suitability of new staff to work with pupils are thorough. He makes sure that staff are exceptionally well trained and receive regular supervision to ensure that systems and procedures are followed. Record-keeping is meticulous.
- Staff are tenacious in building excellent relationships with pupils to gain their trust. The school works in partnership with external partners, including the police, social services and health care providers, to ensure that they do everything they can to meet pupils' complex needs.
- Pupils told the inspector that staff do everything in their power to keep pupils safe from harm. Most pupils make good use of the information they are given by staff to keep themselves and others safe. Parents, carers and staff agree that pupils are safe and cared for well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Given pupils' high levels of disengagement with education when they join the school, the strong progress pupils make testifies to the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The headteacher's ability to quickly and accurately assess pupils' needs and then use that information to plan personalised learning programmes is one of the keys to the school's success. Staff use the excellent relationships they build with the pupils to encourage them to give education a second chance so that pupils follow their programmes.
- Staff are not deterred when there are setbacks. Consequently, almost all pupils attend regularly and enjoy their lessons.
- The headteacher makes sure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged. She makes good use of the subject specialist teachers to offer a range of GCSE courses. She is aware that these pupils are likely to have gaps in their knowledge and skills, due to their disrupted education. The headteacher provides additional support to these pupils to help them keep up. Consequently, these pupils gain qualifications which stand them in good stead to move on to college.
- Many of the pupils lack self-confidence. Teachers and support staff are highly skilled in building pupils' independent learning skills, encouraging pupils to take risks and persevere. As a result, almost all pupils achieve success both at the school and in college.
- Pupils' academic progress is carefully tracked and regularly reviewed. This information is shared with parents and carers each half term so that they keep up to date with how their child is getting on. The headteacher regularly meets pupils to review their progress. This regular dialogue helps her to pick up quickly on any emerging issues, which she then addresses with subject teachers.
- Teachers plan lessons meticulously. They make sure that lessons interest pupils. Teachers and support staff set clear expectations for behaviour. Pupils generally settle down to work quickly and complete the work set. This ensures that time in lessons is used well.
- Teachers rise to the challenge of the different needs of pupils who join the school. The headteacher has made sure that the school is better able to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, particularly in developing their literacy skills. However, the headteacher, quite rightly, identifies that the assessment and tracking system needs refinement to allow for the lower starting points for these pupils.
- Although pupils receive regular feedback about their progress, teachers do not always give pupils sufficiently specific guidance about what they need to do to improve. Pupils studying for GCSE qualifications feel that they do not receive enough information in some subjects about what they need to know and do to meet the requirements for their target grade.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Most pupils, when they join the school, lack judgement in assessing levels of risk. Staff make good use of personal, social and health education lessons to teach pupils about how

to keep themselves safe. Staff use their knowledge of the pupils to tailor the lessons to pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and what they can do if they find themselves in a risky situation.

- Pupils are confident that any behaviour with the potential to escalate into bullying is resolved through the regular school meetings. Staff do not shy away from challenging pupils when their behaviour is unacceptable. Staff make sure that pupils do not take advantage of each other's vulnerabilities.
- The headteacher devises personalised learning programmes, which help pupils quickly re-engage with education. Pupils appreciate the headteacher's willingness to listen to them and take their wishes into account. She devises individual timetables which meet pupils' needs, learning styles and interests. Most importantly, she is willing to continually review and revise plans when they do not work as well. This helps pupils settle quickly into the school and conform to the school's high expectations.
- There is a relentless focus on helping pupils develop the social skills they need to move on successfully to independent living. Staff help pupils develop the skills they need to run their own home, hold down a job and maintain healthy relationships. Some of the pupils volunteer in a local charity shop. Pupils' work colleagues speak highly of the positive contribution they make to the team.
- Most pupils attend the local college as part of their timetable. The headteacher helps pupils to choose appropriate courses. Although, initially, the staff support pupils at college, they encourage pupils to quickly develop independence. Good communication between the school and college ensures that most pupils are successful in their placements and gain relevant qualifications.
- Staff encourage pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. They make sure that pupils try a range of physical activities, including trampolining and climbing. Pupils use the local gym, dog walk and swim. Staff ensure that pupils access any specialist services, such as counselling, to help pupils work through the traumatic past life events they have all experienced.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Most pupils were excluded from their previous schools. The clear boundaries staff put in place help pupils to quickly improve their behaviour. Staff provide excellent role models for the pupils. This, coupled with adults' insistence on good manners, means that pupils are pleasant and polite to staff, visitors and each other most of the time.
- The headteacher has created a calm and purposeful atmosphere which is conducive to learning. She makes sure that, while lessons are meticulously planned, there is sufficient flexibility to adapt them when the need arises. However, pupils are in no doubt that whatever happens they will complete the work set.
- Almost all pupils have missed long periods of education prior to coming to the school. The staff are tenacious in ensuring that pupils quickly establish good attendance habits. Staff make sure that they do everything they can to ensure that pupils are in school, on time, every day. Consequently, pupils' attendance is good.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Prior to joining the school, all pupils have experienced traumatic life events. For all pupils, education has been a low priority. However, the school sees education as the key to turning pupils' lives around. Staff make sure that pupils appreciate the value of academic qualifications and independent-living skills.
- The headteacher has strengthened the curriculum since the previous inspection. The school's population is highly transient, so the headteacher has made sure that pupils can gain recognised qualifications regardless of how long they stay at the school or their different starting points.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their lives. All pupils gain work experience through volunteering locally. During the inspection, a pupil had visited a number of local shops to ask whether they had any vacancies and then completed two job application forms. Pupils learn a range of skills to support independent living, including budgeting, cooking, laundry and journey planning.
- From their different starting points, pupils make good progress. The headteacher ensures that any gaps in learning are quickly closed so that pupils can achieve appropriate qualifications. For many pupils this is a tremendous achievement, considering they had all but given up on education. The most able pupils achieve GCSE passes in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science. Some pupils also study humanities and languages. Other pupils gain functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Those pupils who attend the local college also gain vocational qualifications, such as awards in catering, animal care and caring for children.
- The personalised curriculum, small-group teaching and detailed assessment and tracking mean that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. The headteacher leaves no stone unturned when she works with pupils, to make sure that she is certain that their individual learning needs are correctly identified and supported. The excellent partnerships the school develops with specialist services ensure that these pupils get the additional help they need to be successful.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium funding. The headteacher uses her detailed knowledge of individual pupils to make sure that this money makes a positive difference to the eligible pupils. For example, the headteacher has used the money to fund specialist teachers, so that the school can offer courses leading to additional GCSE qualifications for its most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils who stay at the school until the end of Year 11 move on successfully to education, employment or training. Both current and former pupils rate the quality of careers information, advice and guidance very highly. They cited staff's willingness to help them research courses, visit colleges, complete applications and attend interviews. Moreover, for those pupils who find that things have not worked out as well as they hoped, staff help them revise their plans.

School details

Unique reference number	139426
DfE registration number	888/6058
Inspection number	10026018

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Proprietor	ABC Care Ltd
Headteacher	Eve Elliott
Telephone number	01524 784924
Website	www.abccare.co.uk
Email address	eve@abccare.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 March 2014

Information about this school

- Prospect House School is a small special school that is located in a detached house in a rural setting. It caters for pupils with emotional, social and mental health difficulties.
- The school was registered in March 2013 for up to four pupils, aged from 11 to 16 years.
- The proprietor is ABC Care Ltd.
- All pupils are looked after by their local authorities and have experienced disrupted education and significant periods out of school; most pupils who attend the school have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school uses off-site facilities for some physical education (PE) lessons at local leisure centres and sports facilities.
- The school aims 'to empower and praise young people for positive behaviour to encourage and support them in times of negativity and to enable students to reach their full potential by accessing education in line with the requirements of the national curriculum'. The ultimate aim of the school is to enable pupils to return to mainstream education when appropriate.

- The school uses a local college to provide part-time vocational courses for pupils.
- The school accesses virtual learning in a range of subjects from Academy 21 for some pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of pupils, both in lessons and at break and lunch times. The inspector also carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school staff, including the headteacher and proprietor. Account was taken of six responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- The inspector spoke to a representative of the virtual learning provider and representatives from two of the local authorities which have placed pupils at the school.
- The inspector spoke with pupils formally in meetings and also informally during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector considered a large variety of documentation related to the school's work, the school's view of its performance, and information concerning pupils' attainment, progress and attendance.
- The inspector scrutinised documents and records concerning safeguarding, health and safety and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector considered parents' and carers' responses to surveys conducted by the school.
- The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- The inspector conducted a tour of the premises with the proprietor.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Parent View

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017